

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

Report of the Management Committee

ON THE

VOLUNTARY HOSPITALS EMERGENCY BED SERVICE.

1. In the autumn of 1937 the Voluntary Hospitals Committee for the County of London laid before the Management Committee proposals for the provision in London of a central office which would facilitate the admission to Hospitals of urgent cases. It was widely recognised that a great deal of delay and inconvenience is caused by the fact that a doctor has often to ring up several Hospitals in succession before he can succeed in finding a bed, and that this confusion might be eliminated by the provision of a central office in possession of returns from Hospitals indicating the beds available for the admission of such cases.

2. The Voluntary Hospitals Committee had been impressed by the importance of working out a practicable solution of the difficulty, and had recognised that in many Hospitals, owing to the system of admission, substantial internal reorganisation would be required if a scheme were to succeed. The Committee had therefore given prolonged consideration to the preparation of a scheme originally put forward by University College Hospital. The scheme had been submitted to all the Hospitals within the County of London likely to be affected. The replies showed that the Committee could count upon the active support of the great majority of the Hospitals.

3. The Voluntary Hospitals Committee were, however, faced with the difficulty of financing the projected central office, and asked whether the Fund could see its way to give substantial financial assistance.

4. The Management Committee were impressed by the importance of ensuring that a scheme which might have the effect of materially improving the services given by the Voluntary Hospitals as a whole should not be jeopardised for lack of the comparatively small annual sum needed in order to give the experiment a trial, and felt themselves justified in offering a grant towards the expenses up to £3,000 per annum for three years, and in making

available supervisory staff and office facilities. Their offer was warmly welcomed by the Voluntary Hospitals Committee, and the establishment of the Service was entrusted to a Joint Committee, consisting of representatives of the Voluntary Hospitals Committee (Mr. O. N. Chadwyck-Healey, Dr. A. M. H. Gray, Professor Leonard S. Dudgeon and Dr. Geoffrey Evans) and the Honorary Secretaries of the Fund (Lord Luke, Sir Harold Wernher and Sir Ernest Pooley).

5. The Joint Committee first met on March 18th, and Sir Harold Wernher was appointed Chairman. It was resolved that the Service should be known as the Voluntary Hospitals Emergency Bed Service, and a circular was issued to all Hospitals within the King's Fund area, but outside the County of London, inviting them to participate.

6. Arrangements are now well in hand, and a large number of Hospitals have been visited in order to ensure that the arrangements at the Hospitals themselves are such as to secure effective co-operation. Members of the Staff have visited Stockholm where a similar Service, but on a much smaller scale, has been successfully in operation for some years.

For the Management Committee,

DONOUGHMORE,

Chairman.

May 10, 1938.

